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Housing Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

2/6/23

With regards to HB 5326,

I would like to register my support for HB 5326, and also the ideas set forth in the additional proposed 8-30g revisions (HB 5783, 5784, 5785, 5791, 5793 & 5794)

For over 30 years, the poorly written 8-30g statute has made cohesive planning difficult for towns and cities. It has cost millions of dollars in wasted taxpayer funds in an effort to ameliorate the most damaging proposals as a result of this inadvertent gift to developers. And it's resulted in very little progress on the issue of affordable housing. You might sum it up by using the word "boondoggle".

Unbelievably, many affordable homes, apartments, and ADUs are not counted in the arbitrary 10% goal set by the original legislation. I'm not sure what lawmakers had on their mind by being oddly specific in exclusions, and oddly broad in inclusions. This bill, and the others mentioned above, seeks to bring a little common sense to the methods by which the goal of affordability can be met.

Importantly, under the proposals, ownership of a home by citizens with income under a threshold would be counted. This might encourage builders to conceive of projects that better suit different municipalities, instead of trying to impose the wildly profitable "4 stories over parking" behemoths that seem to now be the universal playbook. Diversity in housing type not only helps different towns maintain character and a sense of "place", but also give more opportunity for people from all walks of life the opportunity to live and work where they choose. It's the goal of 8-30g without the draconian handcuffs and unintended consequences.

Currently, 8-30g is a tool that strips away the rights of citizens living in a particular municipality to decide for themselves the form and intensity of development. Understandably, many of these citizens object to, and fight, any progress due to the impact of bad projects. Sensible changes in the law that result in better proposals from developers would bring more folks on board, and could do more to further affordability in the next few years than in the past 30.

Letting municipalities design affordable housing within their PCOD will result in the best outcome for all stakeholders. Please allow some sensibility to prevail, and consider the bill(s) before you.

Sincerely,

Harry Clark